Sale of Children in Famine Stricken Areas

1972. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that certain drought and famine affected areas in the country, particularly Orissa, have come to such a pass that the parents have sold their children due to starvation;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry has been made by Government to assess the famine conditions in these areas, resulting in such a situation; and

(d) the remedial measures taken by Government in the famine stricken areas in the country, to meet the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) and (b) No such report has been received from any State including Orissa.

(c) No enquiry has been conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture.

(d) In addition to release of Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF), food-grains have been allocated free of cost for Food for Work Programme (FFWP).

Impact of Increased Production and Import of Cotton

1973. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the plight of cotton growers in various part of the country, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu as a result of increased domestic production and the massive imports of cotton;

(b) whether the affected States have brought this plight of farmers to the notice of Government; if so, whether Government would restrict imports of cotton;

(c) if not, the quantum of loss the cotton growers and procurement agencies are likely to suffer; and

(d) whether any corrective measures are in the offing; if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) As per the estimates made by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics of the Ministry of Agriculture, the production of cotton has been 108.51 lakh bales in 1997-98, 122.87 lakh bales in 1998-99 and 116.44 lakh bales in 1999-2000. However, the import of cotton has been 7.87 lakh bales in 1998-99, 22.01 lakh bales in 1999-2000 and 22.00 lakh bales in 2000-2001.

(b) Requests were received to increase duty on import of cotton. The Government is closely monitoring the situation to take appropriate action, if any needed.

(c) and (d) To protect the interest of the cotton growers, the Government announces Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Kapas (seed cotton). Whenever the market prices of kapas touch MSP, the Cotton Corporation of India Ltd. (CCI) undertakes Support Price Operation and purchases kapas at MSP, without any quantitative limit, in all cotton growing states (except in Maharashtra where the Raw Cotton Monopoly Procurement Scheme of State Government is in operation). The loss, if any, incurred on account of support price operation is reimbursed to the CCI by the Government. Therefore the question of loss to the cotton growers or the procurement agency does not arise. In addition to this, the Government has launched the Technology Mission on Cotton to improve the productivity and quality of cotton.

Introducing Co-operative and Contract Farming

1974. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government proposes to introduce co-operative and contract farming, in view of declining average land holding in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) how far small and marginal farmers would be benefited by this move; and